

Lesson Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Lesson ID: 92559-37863

Title: LIGHT ARMORED INFANTRY (LAI) COMPANY

Operation/Exercise Name: MARFOR PROMOTE LIBERTY      Observed: 13 Jun 1990

Originator: COMMARFOR PANAMA

POC: LTCOL FAWCETT    Commercial: (919)451-2620    DSN: 4842620

5. (U) OBSERVATION:

There is a misconception that the Light Armored Infantry (LAI) Company was too heavy for a force the size of Marine Forces Panama.

6. (U) DISCUSSION:

The LAI Company (14 Light Armored Vehicle (LAV) -25s, 2 LAV logistical vehicles, 1 LAV recovery vehicle) has been a component of Marine Forces (MARFOR) Panama for over a year. Although they may require close infantry support in certain situations, the inherent mobility and fire-power of these units make them an especially effective ready reaction force. Also, in a more threatening environment LAVs would be an ideal means and perhaps the only practical means for exerting control over Highway 1, the principle commercial and military ground transportation route in the MARFOR area of operations (AO). Operational experience has demonstrated that LAV-25s have an intimidating presence and are well suited for show of force missions. Task forces operating in the AO and using LAVs have earned respect for MARFOR from among the civilian populace. Additionally, human intelligence (HUMINT) has been a by-product of local civilian interest generated by LAV patrols in cities and towns throughout the AO (see MCLL on this subject). The increased requirement for infantry in a low intensity conflict (LIC) environment supports manning the LAI company with their full complement of four man scout teams.

7. (U) LESSON LEARNED:

The LAI Company in MARFOR was correct for the force size.

8. (U) RECOMMENDED ACTION:

LAI companies be considered as a component of LIC oriented Marine Air Ground Task Forces

(MAGTFs).

9. (U) COMMENTS:

None stated.

\* \* \* \* \*